

Grijalva's District Dispatch

Official Newsletter of Congressman Raúl M. Grijalva



PROTECTING & EXPANDING SOCIAL SECURITY

After passing a tax plan that gave away trillions of dollars to the wealthy and big corporations, congressional Republicans have set their sights on making cuts to Social Security. I remain committed to not only protecting the program, but strengthening it. For close to 80 years, Social Security has guaranteed benefits to Americans after a lifetime of hard work. Thanks to the program, more than 60 million seniors today—including more than one million beneficiaries in Arizona alone—can live their lives with dignity and independence instead of poverty and despair.

Despite its many benefits, many Republicans remain intent on dismantling, cutting, or privatizing already meager benefits in an attempt to end the program. Their latest budget targets Social Security in order to pay for their tax giveaway to the wealthy that added \$2 trillion to the debt. Funding the lifestyles of billionaires at the expense of our seniors is wrong, and that's why I'm prioritizing protecting and expanding Social Security. Our government has a responsibility to pay older Americans their earned Social Security benefits instead of finding clever ways to shortchange them.

I've led the charge in Congress to end the unfair practice of garnishing benefits for the repayment of student loans, Veterans Administration home loans, food stamp overpayments and the like. This practice used to be illegal, however; in 1996 Congress enacted a law that allows benefits to be garnished under certain circumstances. Now, the number of retirees and people with disabilities having their benefits slashed is happening and at an alarming rate. In some instances, Social Security beneficiaries are having their benefits garnished to pay off federal loans they co-signed for their children to go to school. We should not punish older Americans trying to better themselves and their families, and Social Security should be a trusted source of income—no matter what.

This is why I introduced the Protection of Social Security Benefits Restoration Act (H.R. 4500), a bill that will reinstate the prohibition on using Social Security benefits to satisfy debt. This bill is just one of the ways I am working to protect Social Security benefits.

As your representative in Congress, I am committed to ensuring that every senior receives the benefits they qualify for. If you currently have a claim pending with the Social Security Administration or would like more information on how to obtain your Social Security benefits, please contact my office. Our dedicated staff has years of experience in helping seniors and individuals in our District who need assistance with federal agency-related matters. We offer office hours in Tucson, Avondale, and Somerton as well as mobile hours in Nogales and San Luis, Arizona.

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